



Forms LS-313 (Application for Service) and LS-315 (Application for Commitment Service) are controlled copies available as read-only files on the Office of Field Operations server (<\\sdenvls0000a\weblinks\MGCDOCSF\mgc.htm>), and on the Internet (www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mgc/app.htm), and are valid until superseded by the next revision. Printed copies are not controlled and should be verified as the most current issue on the server before use. Current issues of these documents are maintained at point of use, and a copy will be maintained in the Meat Grading and Certification Branch Quality Manual.

APPLICATION FOR MEAT GRADING AND CERTIFICATION SERVICES

Purpose

The purpose of this instruction is to provide Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch policies regarding requests for service.

Policy

Livestock and Seed (LS) Program Mission Statement – To provide timely, high-quality, unbiased service that facilitates orderly marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities, and fosters goodwill in the global marketplace.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Customer Standards

1. You will be treated with courtesy and respect by a responsive and knowledgeable staff.
2. You will be provided accurate, unbiased, and reliable services based on established standards, procedures, and/or specifications.
3. All services will be provided in a cost-effective manner within established time frames.
4. Your suggestions and comments will be considered to continually improve and tailor the services to meet your needs.
5. We will respond to your inquiries and strive to resolve your complaints quickly and efficiently.

Applicant Responsibility

Applicants are responsible for providing a work environment where MGC Branch graders are not subjected to physical and/or verbal abuse concerning grade placements, certification determinations, or other elements which could have a negative effect on providing an unbiased, third-party evaluation. Applicants shall designate one primary company representative to discuss grade placements and certification determinations with MGC Branch graders. AMS regulations allow services to be denied or withdrawn from “any person who, or whose employee or agent...has interfered or obstructed any employee of the Department by intimidation, threats, assaults, abuse, or any improper means.” The regulation has in place an appeal process for applicants who question the services provided.



Debt Collection

The MGC Branch reserves the right to place an applicant in a c.o.d. (cash on delivery) status or a pre-pay status to ensure expenses for services are covered. Payment must be in the form of a certified or cashier's check, bank draft, U.S. Postal Money Order, or personal check (prior approval from Office of Field Operations (OFO) required).

Overtime

It is the responsibility of the MGC Branch supervisor and not the MGC Branch grader to grant overtime. Supervisors are instructed not to permit graders to work such long hours as will endanger their health or cause unsatisfactory work performance. Except in extreme emergency situations, a 10-hour work day maximum will be adhered to.

Callback

Applicants requesting a callback will be charged a minimum of 2-hours premium time. A callback is unscheduled overtime (hours worked over 8 in a day or 40 in a week) performed when a grader is called back to the worksite after having completed the regular daily tour of duty and has left the worksite, or on a day when no work was scheduled for the grader.

General Procedures

1. Any applicant who operates a federally inspected establishment or an establishment operating under an inspection system equal to and recognized by the Federal system can receive MGC Branch services. Request for services must be filed on Form LS-313, Application for Service (attached). Requests for immediate service can be provided by oral request, letter, express mail, facsimile, etc., as long as the LS-313 application is submitted within 3 working days of the request.
2. Approved applications remain valid until:
 - a. Voided in writing by the applicant or MGC Branch.
 - b. A change in name, ownership, and/or location of applicant occurs.
 - c. A period of 2 years has elapsed since service was last performed at the establishment.
3. Federal agencies requesting service are not required to submit written applications.

Application for Service Processing Procedure

1. Multiple applicants/one establishment – When more than one applicant operating in the same establishment requests service, each applicant must complete a LS-313.
2. Single applicant/multiple establishment – When one applicant operates multiple establishments requiring MGC Branch services, each establishment requesting service must complete an LS-313.
3. The MGC Branch area office provides general information and brochures on MGC Branch services, hourly fees, regulations, and two LS-313 forms to the applicant.



4. The applicant completes, signs, and returns both copies of the LS-313 form to the OFO. A photocopy of the signed, dated form will be returned to the applicant and the area office.

Application for Commitment Service Processing Procedures

1. Area supervisors will provide two copies of Form LS-315, Application for Commitment Service (attached), to establishments requesting commitment services. The applicant completes, signs, and returns both copies to OFO. A photocopy of the signed, dated form will be returned to the applicant and area office. Area supervisors may provide commitment services immediately, provided personnel are available. Any personnel transfers required to establish a new commitment must be approved through the OFO and Washington Office (WO).
2. Single Applicant – A single commitment applicant must guarantee 8 hours revenue per day, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal legal holidays.
3. Multiple Applicants – When two or more applicants request to share a commitment, they must collectively guarantee 8 hours revenue per day, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal legal holidays. The hours of service, starting times, prorated driving time and mileage, etc., must be approved by all parties involved prior to processing the agreement. This information can be included on the LS-315 or as an attachment. Graders, if requested, will vary their schedules to multiple applicants so as to give alternate early service to each applicant.
4. The date of application is the date that the applicant signs the form. Commitment agreements are effective on Sunday of a given week.

Federal Holidays

Area supervisors will inform commitment applicants requesting service on a Federal legal holiday that it is a nonworkday by law for graders. Services may be provided for that day at the established holiday rate. No charge will be assessed to commitment applicants on Federal legal holidays when no work is performed. Federal legal holidays are as follows:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

In instances where a Federal legal holiday occurs on a Saturday or Sunday, the preceding Friday or following Monday will be designated a paid holiday for Federal employees. When services are provided on a designated holiday (not the actual Federal legal holiday), applicants will be charged at the appropriate base or premium rate. If no service is provided on the designated holiday, no charge will be assessed to commitment applicants.



Commitment Credits

Area supervisors have the authority to grant allowable credits to commitment applicants when:

1. Service of the grader is not required by the commitment applicant, and the grader can be utilized elsewhere in revenue-earning activities.
2. Due to emergency situations, the supervisor determines that personnel to provide service are not available.

Changes to and Cancellation of Commitments

1. When a change in ownership, number of hours, or realignment of applicants occurs, the commitment must be canceled and a new application completed. Notification of intent to cancel must be made in writing to the area supervisor 7 days prior to the effective date (paragraph 5, reverse of LS-315).
2. When an applicant terminates a commitment and within 1 year is granted a new commitment, the applicant must pay for grader relocation costs. Any relocation costs involving multiple applicants who were involved in the cancellation and reapplication will be prorated in the same proportion as the agreed commitment hours.
3. If one applicant of a multiple commitment withdraws, the area supervisor will immediately contact the remaining applicants and negotiate a revised commitment of MGC Branch hours to each applicant or the addition of another applicant so that the applicants collectively guarantee 8 hours revenue per day, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal legal holidays. The area supervisor can defer adjustment of charges for 30 days.
4. There may be circumstances when it is mutually advantageous to the MGC Branch and the applicant(s) to temporarily suspend a commitment agreement. Examples are:
 - a. Emergencies such as fire, flood, strikes, etc., which affect plant operations, and the assigned grader can be utilized elsewhere.
 - b. National emergencies.
 - c. A trial period for a grader assignment which is likely to result in more efficient manpower utilization. A memorandum of understanding signed by the area supervisor and the applicant(s) specifying the conditions of the temporary suspension of service must be signed, dated, and maintained in area offices and OFO files.

Area supervisors will inform OFO and the WO of new applicants, commitments, noncommitments, cancellations, etc., via the biweekly Management Information Network (MIN) reports.

Fees For Service

1. Base Rate for Commitment Applicant – 8 hours per day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday = \$45.00/hour.
2. Base Rate for Noncommitment Applicant – 8 hours or less per day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday = \$52.00/hour.



3. Premium Rate – excess of 8 hours/day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., any hours before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and any time Saturday and Sunday = \$57.00/hour.
4. Holiday Rate – any hours worked on Federal legal holidays = \$90.00/hour.
5. Mileage Rate = \$0.37/mile.

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Livestock and Seed Program